

*What is claimed is:*

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1. A video surveillance and monitoring system, comprising:  
a private network that enables communication with surveillance cameras at a plurality of geographically distinct client sites; and

5 an off-site storage site, including an image database and at least one server, said at least one server being coupled to said private network and to a public network, said at least one server being operative to coordinate the retrieval of video images from said surveillance cameras, to produce said retrieved video images as live images to at least one client workstation coupled to said public network, and to archive said retrieved video images in said image database for  
10 subsequent production to at least one client workstation coupled to said public network.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said private network is a virtual private network configured over a public network.

15 3. The system of claim 1, wherein said private network is coupled to a camera server, and said camera server is coupled to one or more surveillance cameras.

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4. The system of claim 3, wherein said one or more surveillance cameras produce composite NTSC video signals.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein one of said surveillance cameras is a self-contained web server and network camera.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein said public network is a public Internet network.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein said at least one off-site server is operative to repeatedly store live video image data to a file that is retrievable by a client workstation.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein said at least one off-site server is operative to write live video image data to a temporary file, and to rename said temporary file to said file that is retrievable by a client workstation.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein said at least one off-site server is operative to create a video image record to be stored in said image database.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein said video image record includes video image data and a date-time value.

11. The system of claim 9, wherein said video image record further includes information that identifies an event that led to the capture of the video image data.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein said off-site server is operative to receive event data from a client site and to perform a course of action based upon parameters in a configuration file.

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13. The system of claim 12, wherein upon the receipt of data identifying an occurrence of an event, said off-site server is operative to send a text page to one or more recipients alerting said one or more recipients of the occurrence of said event.

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14. The system of claim 12, wherein said off-site server is operative to issue a request for video image data upon receipt of data identifying an occurrence of an event.

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15. The system of claim 14, wherein upon the receipt of said requested video image data, said off-site server is operative to send an electronic mail message to one or more recipients alerting said one or more recipients of the occurrence of said event, said electronic mail message include at least part of said requested video image data.

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16. A video surveillance and monitoring system, comprising:  
an image database for storing video images; and

at least one server, said at least one server being coupled to a private network that enables communication with surveillance cameras at a plurality of geographically distinct client sites and to a public network, said at least one server being operative to coordinate the retrieval of video images from said surveillance cameras, to produce said retrieved video images as live images to at least one client workstation coupled to said public network, and to archive said retrieved video images in said image database for subsequent production to at least one client workstation coupled to said public network.

17. In an environment including at least one server coupled to a private network that enables communication with surveillance cameras at a plurality of geographically distinct client sites and to a public network, a video surveillance and monitoring method, comprising the steps of:

- (a) receiving video image data from a surveillance camera;
- (b) producing said received video image data as live images to at least one client workstation; and
- (c) archiving said received video image data in an image database for subsequent production to at least one client workstation.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein step (b) comprises the step of storing live video image data to a file that is retrievable by a client workstation.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein step (b) comprises the steps of writing live video image data to a temporary file, and renaming said temporary file to said file that is retrievable by a client workstation.

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20. The method of claim 17, wherein step (c) comprises the step of creating a video image record to be stored in said image database.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein step (c) comprises the step of creating a video image record that includes video image data and a date-time value.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein step (c) comprises the step of creating a video image record that includes information that identifies an event that led to the capture of the video image data.

23. The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

(d) receiving event data from a client site; and

(e) performing a course of action based upon parameters in a configuration file.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein step (e) comprises the step of sending a text page to one or more recipients alerting said one or more recipients of the occurrence of an event.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein step (e) comprises the step of issuing a request  
5 for video image data.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein step (e) comprises the step of sending an electronic mail message to one or more recipients alerting said one or more recipients of the occurrence of said event, said electronic mail message include at least part of said requested  
10 video image data.

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27. In an environment including at least one server coupled to a private network that enables communication with surveillance cameras at a plurality of geographically distinct client sites, a method in a client workstation for retrieving and viewing video images, captured by said  
15 surveillance cameras, that are stored in an image database by the at least one server, comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving computer program logic from a server that enables the client workstation to display a graphical user interface that includes a plurality of client-site elements representative of a corresponding plurality of geographically distinct client sites, wherein each of  
20 said plurality of client-site elements are associated with one or more camera elements

representative of one or more cameras located at a client site represented by said client-site element, wherein said server has access to an image database that stores video image data captured by cameras at a plurality of geographically distinct client sites;

(b) receiving a command from a user to select a first camera element representative of  
5 a first camera at a first client site;

(c) sending a request to a server for retrieval of video image data, recorded by said first camera, that is archived in an image database; and

(d) displaying said requested video image data in an image viewing window of said graphical user interface.

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28. The method of claim 27, wherein step (a) comprises the step of receiving computer program logic that enables the client workstation to display a graphical user interface that includes a plurality of hyperlinked client-site elements representative of a corresponding plurality of geographically distinct client sites, wherein selection of a hyperlinked client-site  
15 element enables said graphical user interface to display one or more camera elements representative of one or more cameras located at a client site represented by said hyperlinked client-site element.

20 29. The method of claim 28, wherein step (a) comprises the step of displaying one or more hyperlinked camera elements, wherein selection of a hyperlinked camera element enables

said graphical user interface to display video image data captured by a camera represented by  
said hyperlinked camera element.

30. The method of claim 27, wherein step (a) comprises the step of receiving  
5 hypertext markup language, JavaScript, and Java code.

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